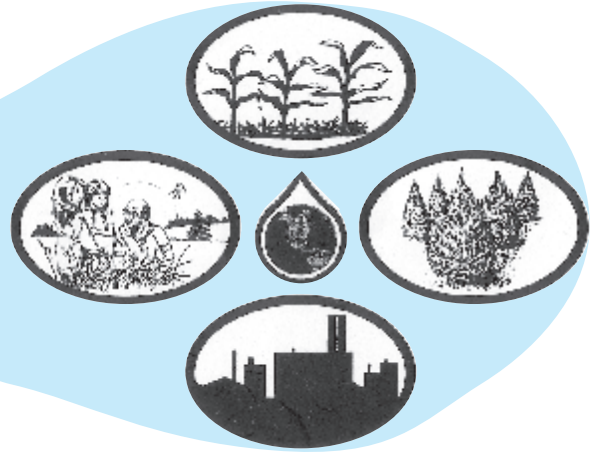




St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District

CONSERVATION KALEIDOSCOPE



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

July/August 2012
Volume 14, Issue 4

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What's Going On...

Events hosted by the
St. Joseph County SWCD &
Our Partners in Conservation.
Call for Details & to RSVP.

JULY

Jun. 29-Jul. 7 -

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY 4-H FAIR

**4 - INDEPENDENCE DAY -
OFFICE CLOSED**

**16 - SWCD Monthly Board
Meeting, 7PM @ Our Office -
PUBLIC ALWAYS WELCOME!**

**17 - FREE PUBLIC EVENT, Healthy
People/Healthy Water
Workshop, 10AM-5PM @
Taltree Arboretum & Gardens,
Valparaiso (see pg 3)**

**21 - Youth Conservation Camp
- Eckhart Park, Auburn (see pg 3)**

**25 - FREE PUBLIC EVENT, Animal
Waste Facility/Soil Health Farm
Tour, 10AM-NOON, New Carlisle
(see pg 4)**

AUGUST

**TBD - St. Jos. Cty. SWCD/
Michiana Stormwater Partner-
ship, Contractors' Workshop
(watch for details on our website
and our Facebook page)**

**9 - Youth Conservation Camp -
Camp Whitley on Troy Cedar
Lake (see pg 3)**

**20 - SWCD Monthly Board
Meeting, 7PM @ Our Office -
PUBLIC ALWAYS WELCOME!**

SEPTEMBER

**TBD - Tri-County Forestry Field
Day (watch for details on our
website and our Facebook page)**

4 - LABOR DAY - OFFICE CLOSED

**17 - SWCD Monthly Board
Meeting, 7PM @ Our Office -
PUBLIC ALWAYS WELCOME!**

Have You Heard? ... The SCOOP on POOP

In the last edition of the **Conservation Kaleidoscope** (May/June 2012 - "Do YOU Have What it Takes to Become a Backyard Conservationist?"), we discussed how it is important to have the soil in your lawn tested before adding fertilizer. This will give you a good baseline for the soil nutrients, and will let you know whether it is even necessary to add fertilizer or whether it would be a waste of money. Alarming, over-fertilizing with nutrients such as Nitrogen and Phosphorus, from both lawn care and agricultural fertilizers, are responsible for algal blooms in our local waterways and downstream in Lake Erie and the Gulf of Mexico. Why do your part to decrease the potential for harmful algal blooms (or HABs, also commonly called "red tides")? The concerns of HABs range from public health, environmental, and economic issues.

What Else Can You Learn from a Soil Test?

Unfortunately, the soil test may indicate that your beloved family pet's waste is adding too many nutrients to the soil, and that you may need to do a better job of cleaning up after them. In the farming world, the environmental practice of cleaning up after the animals in our lives is known as "animal waste management" (see pg. 2).

Even if your soil needs more nutrients it is good to keep in mind that **every time it rains, thousands of pounds of pet waste** washes down storm drains and into streams, rivers and lakes. If not disposed of properly, pet waste flows directly into these waterways without being treated at wastewater treatment facilities. The bacteria and nutrients in ordinary pet waste that is washed down into our storm drains and local waterways is a form of pollution that is easily preventable, and these same nutrients can contribute to the same HABs discussed above.

Adults working in their gardens, children who play

outside, and family pets are among those at high risk of infection from bacteria and parasites found in pet waste.

A Few Ways to Manage Pet Waste

- Always clean up after your pet (even in your own yard!) ... Remember: Pet waste is not fertilizer
 - Never dispose of pet waste down a storm drain
 - Bag pet waste and place it in the trash
 - Flush pet waste down the toilet
 - Bury pet waste in your yard, at least 12 inches deep and cover with at least eight inches of soil to let it decompose slowly. You can bury the waste in several different locations and keep it away from vegetable gardens.
 - Encourage other pet owners to be responsible
- Simply managing your pet's waste can significantly reduce health risks to the entire community and improve the quality of life for the wildlife and people who live near streams, rivers, and lakes, and those who use them for recreation.

LEARN MORE

- Call the SWCD office at 574-291-7444 ext. 3
- US Geological Survey's Fact Sheet on "Harmful Algal Blooms" at <http://on.doi.gov/Jwx15x>
- EPA's Fact Sheet on "Pet Waste Management" at <http://1.usa.gov/cRaHdL>
- Mid-America Regional Council's webpage, "Pick up After Your Pet" at <http://bit.ly/xCIE87>



Image Source: The Metro D.C. Dog Blog at www.metro-dc-dog-blog.com



MANURE! "I LOVE MANURE!"

Guest Article by: **Melissa Lehman, Agronomic Solutions, LLC**

My name is Melissa Lehman. I own and operate a manure management, consulting service. With several full time employees, we work with the **Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM)** and farmers to obtain **Confined Feeding Operations (CFO)** and **Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO)** permits. As a **Technical Service Provider (TSP)**, I work with the **U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** to help farmers obtain Farm Bill money through the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** to implement new practices. We do soil and manure testing with recommendations to the farmer as well as help clients get their county building permits. **But my passion is MANURE!**

Given the complexity of new rules and regulations, it might be well advised to consider hiring a consultant to keep you up to date.
~ Melissa Lehman

Manure is a very hot commodity these days. Do you know how much your manure is really worth? Based on current fertilizer prices, manure from a swine grower pit is worth approximately \$53.92 per 1,000 gallons; manure taken from a dairy lagoon is worth approximately \$13.62 per 1,000 gallons; while broiler litter is worth approximately \$46.08 per ton. Manure is so much more than just nutrient value for your soil. It has many biological and organic benefits. You should want to spread manure on as many of your row crop acres as possible.

It's important to know what rates you are actually spreading so make sure you calibrate your spreading equipment for the proper rate. Taking credit for nutrients that you apply adds up to big savings on your fertilizer bill. From the **Pre-sidedress Soil Nitrate Test (PSNT)** samples that have been taken so far this year, trends of higher nitrogen levels are being detected in soils. Weather conditions this spring have been favorable for nitrogen mineralization which is causing the high nitrate levels. Pulling PSNT samples and using your manure credits can save you big money!



There are many new rules that have and are being implemented by IDEM. The **Category 14 Agricultural Fertilizer Applicator License** is now required for anyone who spreads manure from an IDEM permitted facility. If you are distributing any manure from an IDEM permitted facility you will also need to obtain the Agricultural Fertilizer Distributor License. Enforcement for both of the previous rules is completed by the **Office of the Indiana State Chemist**.

REVISED CFO IDEM RULE COMING OUT:

IDEM also has a **revised CFO rule** coming out **July 1, 2012**, which contains several new or updated standards. These include:

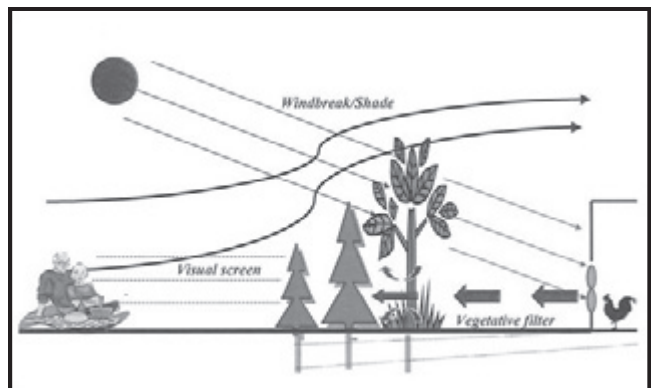
- **Conducting weekly facility self inspections;**
- **Additional documentation in the operating records;**
- **Manure application rates will be based upon both phosphorus and nitrogen limits;**

- **Annual manure sampling;**
- **Application to frozen or snow-covered ground will be restricted as well as storm water management must be implemented;**
- **A professional engineer must certify the construction of all liquid manure storages.**

With manure values at a higher level, getting the most out of your manure is key. The most economical way to spread your manure is to follow the **NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Conservation Standard**. This standard is based on the soil test phosphorus levels. According to this standard, any area with a soil test level of >200 ppm is not to have manure spread on it. Areas testing between 100 and 200 ppm are to only be spread at crop removal rates. Any areas testing between 50 and 100 ppm can receive 1.5 times the crop removal rate and those areas that test below 50 ppm can be spread based on the nitrogen.

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Here are a few tips for good neighbor relations. When you are spreading manure, be sure to take into consideration wind levels on the days you are going to spread. Follow all manure spreading setbacks to help protect those in the community from possible contamination. If odor is a problem from your manure storages, a good rule of thumb is "people don't smell what they can't see." We all know this is not always the case, but it is proven that putting up rows of trees blocks much of the odor.



LEARN MORE:

- **CALL** the **St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation PARTNERSHIP (SWCD and NRCS)** at 574-291-7444 ext. 3
- **ATTEND** the **St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation PARTNERSHIP's FREE ANIMAL WASTE FACILITY TOUR** on Wed., July 25, 2012 (see pg. 4)
- **VISIT** Melissa's website at **agronomicsolutionsllc.com** or give her a call at 260-593-2092
- **VISIT** Purdue University's webpage for CAFO's at **www.ansc.purdue.edu/CAFO**



THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

EMPOWER YOURSELF WITH CONSERVATION KNOWLEDGE

Providing opportunities for **CONSERVATION EDUCATION** to the youth and adults of our community is a **KEY** component of our **MISSION** here at the **St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership** (the **SWCD & NRCS**). This can be in the form of taking advantage of informal “teachable moments,” providing technical assistance to landowners, organizing and participating in formal educational programs and workshops, or spreading the word about opportunities provided by our partners in conservation throughout the state. The St. Joseph County SWCD is always proud to join forces with the NRCS and our other partners in conservation whenever the opportunity arises.

Here, we highlight a few upcoming events that you may enjoy and learn from.

HEALTHY WATER, HEALTHY PEOPLE

*A nationwide program sponsored by the Project WET Foundation and the Hach Scientific Foundation
... and a FREE PROGRAM brought to you by Project WET Coordinators / SWCD Staff in Kosciusko and St. Joseph Counties*

HEALTHY WATER, HEALTHY PEOPLE, launched in 2000, is designed to raise awareness and understanding of **WATER QUALITY** topics and issues by demonstrating the relationship of water quality to personal, public and environmental health. Targeting teachers and students in grades six through 12, the Healthy Water, Healthy People program:

- uses innovative, interactive activities and materials; and
- demonstrates critical water quality topics in simple, understandable ways

The materials used in the program are designed to give **EDUCATORS, STUDENTS** and **ANYONE ELSE** who is concerned about our water an opportunity to explore water quality topics in an **INTERACTIVE, EASY-TO-USE, HANDS-ON** format. Participants even get to take home the official “**Healthy Water, Healthy People Water Quality Educators Guide**”!

Please join us on **July 17, 2012** from **10AM TO 5PM (EDT)** at **Taltree Arboretum** (450 W 100 N, Valparaiso, IN) for this free workshop and **don’t forget to bring a lunch**. We do ask that you call **219-462-0025** to preregister so we can be sure to have enough materials for everyone. For **questions** about the program itself, please contact **Kosciusko County SWCD** at 574-267-7445 ext. 3 or visit the official website for the Healthy Water, Healthy People program at **www.projectwet.org** (under the drop-menu for “Resources by Topic”).



CONSERVATION DAY CAMPS—TWO OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AGES 8-12

Conservation Day Camp is an opportunity for students to learn more about conservation of natural resources and our environment in an outdoor setting, and is open to any student regardless of the county you live in. Each Day Camp session is from **9:30AM to 3:30PM EDT**, and with a **registration fee of \$10**, lunch is **provided**. **Pre-registration** is required to attend.

The first Conservation Day Camp will be held **Thurs., July 12th** at **Eckhart Park in Auburn**, and you can pre-register with **the Steuben County SWCD at 260-665-3211 ext. 3**. This camp will include learning about Native American life and hands-on activities. There will also be opportunity to swim in the Auburn City Pool.

The second Conservation Day Camp will be held **Thurs., August 9th** at Camp Whitley on **Troy Cedar Lake in Whitley County** (about 9 miles northeast of Columbia City). This will be a continued session about Native American life and the day will end with a dip in Troy Cedar Lake. Please be sure to pre-register with the **Whitley County SWCD at 260-244-6266 ext. 3**.

DID YOU KNOW? “Studies show outdoor time helps children grow lean and strong, enhances imaginations and attention spans, decreases aggression, and boosts classroom performance. In addition, children who spend time in nature regularly are shown to become better stewards of the environment.”

SOURCE: National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Website

*Learn more about the wide range of benefits our youth reap by spending more time outdoors
by using this web shortcut to the NWF website - <http://bit.ly/9unYCC>*



ST JOSEPH COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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 Jeremy Cooper, Vice Chair
 Jim LaFree, Member
 Stacey Silvers, Member
 Paul Williams, III, Member

Associate Supervisors:

Dave Craft
 Jan Ivkovich
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 Melvin Kulwicki
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 Joe Long
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 Arlene Schuchman
 Dale Stoner
 Dave Vandewalle
 Dru Wrasse

Honorary Members:

Bernard Byrd
 Al Gostola
 Jerry Knepp
 Keith Lineback
 William Millar



**PHOTO -
 The Gambles'
 Animal Waste
 Facility, from the
 St. Joseph County
 Soil & Water
 Conservation
 Partnership
 Photo Archive, 2009**

ANIMAL WASTE FACILITY TOUR ON 7/25/12

On Wed., July 25, 2012 from 10AM-NOON EDT, come join the NRCS and St. Joseph County SWCD at the Gambles' Dairy Farm in New Carlisle to learn first-hand at a local dairy farm how ANIMAL WASTE (A.K.A. MANURE) can be properly managed to protect water quality. In addition, manure generated by livestock can be returned to the soil to improve tilth and fertility. You will also learn about potential funding and technical assistance opportunities for animal waste management and other conservation practices. For the community at large, soil health is analogous to the concepts of environmental health, human health, plant health, and animal health. This is a **FREE EVENT** and while the target audience is typically other farmers, anyone interested in soil and water quality is welcome. Please RSVP and obtain directions by calling us at 574-291-7444, ext 3.

Office Staff:

Debbie Knepp, NRCS
 Amanda Kautz, NRCS
 Patrick Glassman, NRCS SCEP
 Intern
 Rick Glassman, SWCD
 Andrew Fox, SWCD
 Lisa Wynn, SWCD

Farm Service Agency Staff:

Doug Hovermale, District Director
 Abby Curtis, Acting CED
 Linda Bentele, Program Technician
 Jenny Brosius, Program Technician

**St. Jos. Cty. SWCD
 MISSION**

To provide guidance and education to the youth and adults of St. Joseph County and to administer programs to preserve, protect and improve soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources for future generations.